

Skills in RE

The following skills are central to religious education, and should be reflected in learning opportunities. This syllabus places an important emphasis on the development of skills at all stages of learning. This section highlights the skills intrinsic to RE, followed by the contribution of RE to the broader skills in the primary and secondary curriculum. The level descriptions are rooted in skills and illustrate how pupils progress through the development of key skills.

a) **Investigation** – this includes:

- asking relevant questions;
- knowing how to use a variety of sources in order to gather information;
- knowing what may count as good evidence in understanding religion(s).

b) **Interpretation** – this includes:

- the ability to draw meaning from artefacts, works of art, poetry and symbolism;
- the ability to interpret religious language;
- the ability to suggest meanings of religious texts.

c) **Reflection** – this includes:

- the ability to reflect on feelings, experience, attitudes, beliefs, values, relationships, practices and ultimate questions.

d) **Empathy** – this includes:

- developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow;
- the ability to consider the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others;
- the ability to see the world through the eyes of others, and to see issues from their point of view.

e) **Evaluation** – this includes:

- the ability to debate issues of religious significance with reference to evidence, argument, opinion and statements of faith;
- weighing the respective claims of self-interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience.

f) **Analysis** – this includes:

- distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact;
- recognizing bias, caricature, prejudice and stereotyping;
- distinguishing between the features of different religions.

g) **Synthesis** – this includes:

- linking significant features of religion(s) together in a coherent pattern;
- connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole.

h) **Application** – this includes:

- making links between religion and individual, community, national and international life;
- identifying key religious values and their links with secular values.

i) **Expression** – this includes:

- the ability to articulate ideas, beliefs and values;
- the ability to respond to religious ideas, beliefs and questions through a variety of media.

j) **Self-understanding** – this includes:

- the ability to draw meaning from significant experiences in their own and others' lives and from religious questions and answers.

ESSENTIALS FOR LEARNING AND LIFE - THE CONTRIBUTION OF RE

The phrase 'essentials for learning and life' originated from the primary curriculum review 2010. Although this proposed primary curriculum did not become statutory the central skills outlined below play an important role in developing pupils' learning.

- **LITERACY**
- **NUMERACY**
- **ICT CAPABILITY**
- **LEARNING AND THINKING SKILLS**
- **PERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS**
- **SOCIAL SKILLS**

RE makes a significant contribution to five of these six essentials for learning in the following ways:

LITERACY

RE can help pupils to:

- acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary;
- communicate their ideas with depth and precision;
- listen to the views and ideas of others, including people from religious traditions;
- be enthusiastic about the power and beauty of language, recognizing its limitations;
- develop their speaking and listening skills when considering religious beliefs and ideas and articulating their responses;
- read, and interpret at an appropriate level, sacred texts;
- write in different styles such as poetry, diaries, extended writing and the synthesis of differing views, beliefs and ideas;
- evaluate clearly and rationally, using a range of reasoned, balanced arguments.

Of all the key areas in the curriculum, literacy, in many ways, is the one RE has the strongest connections with.

In terms of **speaking and listening**, learning in RE can help pupils to:

- listen well to the viewpoints of others;
- structure ideas and viewpoints clearly;

- make relevant comments on their learning in RE;
- articulate their own views and ideas using reasoned arguments;
- use specialist vocabulary with increasing accuracy and fluency.

In terms of **reading** RE can help pupils to:

explore a range of key stories, teachings and sayings from different religions, considering their meanings and the ways in which they have been interpreted;

- distinguish between facts, opinions and beliefs;
- make connections between different parts of a text;
- consider viewpoints and arguments carefully ;
- reflect on how the contemporary media conveys the place of religion in the world e.g., newspapers, magazines, articles, leaflets, advertisements;
- consider how and why texts have been influential and significant;
- compare texts, looking at style, theme and language, identifying connections;
- reflect on how ideas, values and emotions are explored and portrayed.

In terms of **writing** RE can help pupils to:

- use a range of techniques and different ways of structuring material to convey ideas, themes and beliefs;
- present material clearly, using appropriate layout, illustrations and organisation;
- develop logical arguments and cite evidence;
- analyze critically their own and others' writing;
- use specialist vocabulary accurately and consistently;
- use a variety of writing styles e.g. diaries, poetry and structured essays to convey their learning in RE.

ICT CAPABILITY

RE can help pupils to:

- make appropriate use of the internet or CD-ROM sources to investigate, analyze and evaluate aspects of religious beliefs and practices, ultimate questions and ethical issues;
- use email or video conferencing to communicate and collaborate with individuals in different locations, enabling associations to be made between religions and individual, national and international life;
- use multimedia and presentation software to communicate a personal response, the essence of an argument or a stimulus for discussion;
- use writing support and concept-mapping software to organise ideas and communicate knowledge and understanding of the diversity of belief and practice within and between religious traditions;
- use equipment such as digital cameras and videos, to bring authentic images into the classroom to support discussion and reflection, and to enhance understanding of the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the lives of local individuals and faith communities.

LEARNING and THINKING SKILLS

RE can help pupils to:

- investigate beliefs, practices and ways of life using resources effectively and developing knowledge and understanding;
- think creatively, sharing their own thoughts and conclusions, reflecting on how religions and beliefs express key beliefs and teachings in a variety of ways;
- investigate, reflect on and evaluate important question of meaning;
- communicate both ideas and values in religion and belief and their own thoughts and ideas, interacting with different audiences and using a range of media;
- evaluate the place and significance of religion and belief in today's world, developing their own views, using reasoned and thoughtful arguments.

PERSONAL and EMOTIONAL SKILLS

RE can help pupils to:

- identify their strengths and areas for improvement in their learning in RE be aware of both their own feelings and those of others, especially people from different faiths and beliefs;
- reflect on their experiences and how these might relate to their learning in RE;
- work both independently and collaboratively with others;
- demonstrate perseverance in their learning in RE especially when faced with challenging concepts and ideas.

SOCIAL SKILLS

RE can help pupils to:

- listen well and respond respectfully and sensitively when encountering people from different faiths and beliefs;
- show both empathy and critical awareness;
- consider their rights and responsibilities and the key beliefs and teachings within religion on human nature, relationships and the value /purpose of human beings.